United Nations S/PV.7395

Security Council

Seventieth year

Provisional

7395th meeting

Friday, 27 February 2015, 10 a.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Liu Jieyi	(China)
Members:	Angola	Mr. Gimolieca
	Chad	Mr. Gombo
	Chile	Mr. Llanos
	France	Mr. Delattre
	Jordan	Mr. Hmoud
	Lithuania	Mr. Baublys
	Malaysia	Mrs. Adnin
	New Zealand	Mr. McLay
	Nigeria	Mr. Laro
	Russian Federation	Mr. Churkin
	Spain	Mr. Fernández-Arias Minuesa
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir Mark Lyall Grant
	United States of America	Mr. Pressman
	Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	Mr. Suárez Moreno

Agenda

Letter dated 28 February 2014 from the Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2014/136)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the translation of speeches delivered in other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room U-0506 (verbatimrecords@un.org). Corrected records will be reissued electronically on the Official Document System of the United Nations (http://documents.un.org).

15-05362 (E)

Accessible document Please recycle

The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Letter dated 28 February 2014 from the Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2014/136)

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Ambassador Heidi Tagliavini, Special Representative of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Chairperson-in-Office in Ukraine, and Ambassador Ertuğrul Apakan, Head of the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine, to participate in this meeting.

On behalf of the Council, I welcome Ambassadors Tagliavini and Apakan, who are joining today's meeting via video-teleconference from Kyiv.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I now give the floor to Ambassador Tagliavini.

Ms. Tagliavini: I am asking for the Council's attention at a moment that may become a turning point in the Ukrainian conflict.

We indeed seemed to be standing at the brink of an all-out war in Ukraine just a few days ago. Today, we are actively engaged in de-escalation, which we hope may become an irreversible process. A sustainable ceasefire and a continued process of de-escalation, including the withdrawal of heavy military equipment, are in our opinion indispensable prerequisites to any further progress on the way towards a peaceful settlement. Let me repeat that unless the guns fall silent, there will be no hope for stabilizing the situation, let alone for peace.

When the first Minsk agreements were signed on 5 and 19 September last year, the toll in terms of human lives taken by the war already stood at around 3,500, with an even higher number of wounded. Five months later, when the implementation package was signed in Minsk on 12 February and the declaration of the four Heads of State and Government was agreed upon, the death toll was already close to 6,000, not to mention those missing in action. On top of these alarming figures of persons left dead by fighting and other violence, there are thousands more seriously wounded, there are vast areas of utter destruction, and — last but not least — there are more than 1 million internally displaced persons (IDPs), plus a significant number of refugees from the conflict area. It is a scene of all-out human tragedy, and we deeply deplore each of the victims.

These sad figures were further increased by a considerable number of dead and wounded when, in clear violation of the recent ceasefire, the rebel forces took the Ukrainian controlled city of Debaltseve after intense fighting, with much further bloodshed and destruction. In addition, in a parallel development to the Debaltseve fighting, access, monitoring and verification were repeatedly denied to the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe Special Monitoring Mission for several consecutive days.

Fortunately, in the most recent days, we have witnessed a significant reduction of hostilities, another release of detainees and, finally, the beginning of the withdrawal of heavy arms from the line of separation. These most recent developments are encouraging signs. We hope that this trend will prove to be sustainable and followed by further positive developments.

Where do we stand now? In our opinion, if the aforementioned most recent positive developments do not continue, we will be again in a negative spiral leading towards more dead, more destruction, more IDPs and refugees, and almost certainly towards an even more serious crisis, entailing the risk of a larger war. This we cannot accept.

We welcome the active engagement and continued involvement of Heads of State and Government, notably in the Normandy format, in order to stabilize the situation and work for a peaceful settlement. We know that we are still far away from this goal, but through the pattern that has been laid the road has been established. Against that background of agreements reached at the senior political level, it is the purpose of the Trilateral Contact Group to build bridges and to provide opportunities to implement these agreements and to work out peaceful solutions on the ground.

Should the ceasefire hold and de-escalation continue, the Trilateral Contact Group stands ready to take appropriate steps towards the full implementation of the Minsk agreements and the establishment of a proper monitoring and verification mechanism, in which the Special Monitoring Mission is to play a central

role. I thank my dear colleague and friend Ambassador Apakan for all the efforts he and his Mission are doing in that direction.

The Trilateral Contact Group is already in the process of developing a scenario for setting up working groups, as foreseen in the implementation package of February. It seems obvious to me that these working groups must focus first on the most important and most urgent issues. These are the security- and humanitarian-related parts of the package, which must benefit the people in need as quickly as possible, together with an inclusive political dialogue, as well as economic and social rehabilitation.

In my opinion, the delivery of humanitarian aid to the conflict area and its population, who are in dire need of almost every basic services and commodities required for daily life, should be one of our top priorities. We should be able to establish a mutually acceptable framework, including rules and procedures for these efforts. And it would be most helpful if we reached agreement among all sides to conduct a humanitarian needs assessment mission to the region, representing internationally recognized organizations such as the International Committee of the Red Cross and relevant United Nations bodies and other organizations. Such a mission may also lay the groundwork for the coordination of relief efforts coming from various sides on the basis of their mutually acceptable findings. Having in mind the precarious humanitarian situation in the conflict area, some time ago I worked out and handed over to my colleagues in the Trilateral Contact Group a draft document on the general modalities for consideration and appropriate action.

Touching upon conditions in the conflict region, I also suggest that, at the earliest possible point in time, plans and other necessary preparations should be made for the removal of unexploded ordinance and all other dangerous remnants of war, and these plans should be carried out as soon as the situation on the ground allows. In view of the high number of displaced persons, it is our understanding that more efforts need to be made to alleviate the suffering of the more than 1 million IDPs and refugees, victims of the conflict, and facilitate the creation of favourable conditions conducive to their return to their places of origin.

Let me finally return to what I said at the beginning. We seem to be at a crossroads where we either face the risk of a further escalation of the conflict or where common sense, responsibility and humanity shall prevail and we may be able to walk on the road to peace, as laid out by the four Heads of State and Government during their recent meeting in Minsk. In spite of the existing complexity of the situation, we will not give up our hopes and our engagement. I thank Council members for their attention and their support for all our endeavours.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank Ambassador Tagliavini for her briefing.

I now give the floor to Ambassador Apakan.

Mr. Apakan: I am grateful for this opportunity to brief the Council about the situation in Ukraine. Since the last time I addressed the Council (see S/PV.7311), a package of measures towards the peaceful solution of the conflict in eastern Ukraine has been agreed in Minsk. We welcome this agreement. We also welcome the declaration by the Normandy Powers — France, Germany, Russia and Ukraine — and their determination that the package of measures agreed in Minsk should be implemented in full. The Security Council has unanimously endorsed the package of measures and welcomed the declaration. We are working for their full implementation.

The Minsk package is an integrated whole, and foresees an immediate and unconditional ceasefire and a withdrawal of heavy weapons, followed by a political process involving local elections, as well as constitutional reform. The agreed ceasefire and the withdrawal of heavy weapons are now the priority and the basis for all other provisions of the Minsk documents. Nevertheless, immediately after the entry into force of the ceasefire, heavy attacks by rebels around the town of Debaltseve took place. This was an attempt to create new facts on the ground, and so to change the basis on which the latest package of measures had been agreed. These attacks were against the letter and the spirit of the Minsk agreements.

Today, I can report that in the past few days combat operations have been significantly reduced across the conflict zone, although some violence has still occurred around Donetsk airport, as well as close to the town of Mariupol. Over the past two days, we have also seen significant indications that both sides are now taking steps to comply with their responsibilities under the Minsk package. Concerning the withdrawal of heavy weapons, yesterday our monitors began observing the movement of heavy weapons away from

the line of contact in several instances. Despite the fact that the Special Monitoring Mission in Ukraine of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) was not able to establish the origin or final places of storage for those weapons, this is a welcome development. However, it is only the beginning of the process, and we encourage the sides to take more steps in that direction. The OSCE has been given some direct tasks related to implementation of the package of measures, one of which is that it will facilitate, monitor and verify the withdrawal of heavy weapons from a defined security zone.

The Special Monitoring Mission is ready to take on that responsibility in line with its mandate, but in order to fulfil that role we need improved baseline information. On 13 February, immediately after agreement was concluded on the package of measures, we wrote to the signatories to make clear what information we needed from them if the Mission were to conduct this work. That information should cover the heavy weapons they have, the current location of those weapons, the routes that will be used to withdraw them and their locations after they have been withdrawn. The parties have provided answers, but the information is not yet sufficient. The Mission has been monitoring the movement of heavy weapons for five months, but there is a clear distinction between that activity, which will continue, and our ability to verify that the weapons have indeed been withdrawn and safely and securely stored. The same requirement for baseline information applies to monitoring the withdrawal of foreign armed formations and mercenaries, another responsibility the OSCE has been given.

After expansion in line with our mandate, the Special Monitoring Mission currently has 451 monitors, of whom more than 300 are in the Donetsk and Luhansk regions. In that context, it is important to note that the Mission remains a civilian mission that is being assigned tasks that come close to the purview of peacekeeping. Furthermore, the Mission's operations related to the Minsk package will not be confined to monitoring on or around a contact line. Our operations will take place in and around the entire defined security zone, which is more than 400 kilometres long and 140 kilometres wide and includes large parts of the Russian-Ukrainian State border. That huge area, approximately 50,000 square kilometres, will form the core of the Special Monitoring Mission's activities and will necessitate new operational capacities and processes.

Those new capacities include expanding the Mission's technological capacity and corresponding expert staff. Our monitors' work should be complemented with additional information-gathering means such as satellite imagery, the relocation of a large number of unmanned aerial vehicles and more image-gathering technology. Those elements have been established in the Minsk documents. In order to make this qualitative upgrade of the Mission's capacity, we will need close cooperation with the United Nations. We are also examining an expanded geographical capability for the four existing teams located in Luhansk, Donetsk, Kharkiv and Dnepropetrovsk, the areas of responsibility where we anticipate seeing the ceasefire and heavy weapon withdrawal zones. That may require establishing additional patrolling hubs to better cover the weapons withdrawal area.

The conclusion of the Minsk accords also gives hope for improvement in the humanitarian situation. To date, however, there are still more than a million internally displaced persons, some living in desperate circumstances. The conflict continues to take a heavy toll on the civilian population, particularly in and around the conflict zone. The Special Monitoring Mission, within the framework of its mandate, will not lose sight of that aspect of the conflict and will concentrate on related tasks throughout Ukraine. We will continue to facilitate humanitarian aid where possible and do our very best to be helpful to the population through our wide presence on the ground. This important work in the areas of human rights, gender and dialogue facilitation will help to consolidate the basis on which the political part of the Minsk agreements relies.

In conclusion, I should repeat that a full and unconditional ceasefire remains the foundation for further implementation of the Minsk accords. The Special Monitoring Mission can and will be helpful in this process and will implement its mandate impartially and in close cooperation with all sides. However, nothing can replace the firm political willingness on the part of all sides to achieve peace and normalization. The Minsk documents and President Poroshenko's peace plan remain the way forward for restoring peace and stability to Ukraine.

Lastly, I would also like to mention the valuable work of the Trilateral Contact Group and the efforts of Ambassador Heidi Tagliavini, with whom we are working closely and to whom we are grateful.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*). I thank Ambassador Apakan for his briefing.

The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

Before adjourning the meeting, I would like to express the Chinese delegation's sincere appreciation to the members of the Council, especially my colleagues the Permanent Representatives, their staffs and the Secretariat of the Council, for all the support they have given us. It has indeed been a busy month, and one in which we rallied to arrive at a consensus on several important issues within our purview. We could not have done it alone or without the hard work, support and positive contributions of every delegation and the representatives of the Secretariat, as well as all the relevant conference service officers. As we end our presidency, I know I speak for the whole Council in wishing the delegation of France good luck in the month of March.

The meeting rose at 10.30 a.m.